Dear wife and children,

大家好！I have arrived sound and safely in San Francisco, California. The weather is just perfect and the bay is beautiful. The United States are everything I expected it to be and more! The ship ride wasn’t too bad. I got a little sea sick around day 17, but after the 33 days were finally complete, I was a happy man. For only a mere 50 dollars, I’d have to say it was totally worth it considering the rough economic times everyone at home is experiencing. I am definitely not one of the first to emigrate from home. There are so many Chinese emigrants looking to mine gold, just like me. You wouldn’t believe how much gold there was a few months ago. Some are referring to it as the “California Gold Rush” and for good reason. I might have come to the states just a bit too late and missed out on the peak of gold mining. No worries though! I’ve kept myself busy with other forms of work to keep the money rolling in.

How are things back in Canton? I really miss home from time to time. I hope you are all doing well without me. I know money is short, but I am really working hard to be able to support you guys. However, as hard as I am working, it’s really hard to find a sufficient job. Almost all the gold is almost gone, and most of us are switching over to railroad work. It’s really cool to think that the United States is going to try to link their entire country together by train transportation. I can’t decide if I want to partake in railroad labor. As you know, it’s always been an ambition of mine to start up a restaurant. Chinese food is very popular in California, and I think I could bring a unique taste of home to America. Plus, I think it will help with my home sickness.

Despite all the positive things I’ve said about the US, it’s not all great. In fact, some of the American people are really displeased with our presence. They claim that we Chinese people are taking jobs away from the “real Americans.” They are even writing an official government document that excludes Chinese people. Unfortunately, this problem has escalated quite a bit. I heard from a friend of mine that a group of Chinese people were killed for discriminatory reasons. No need to worry though, I’m doing just fine. I’ve decided to stay with a bunch of other people like me in a small subsection of San Francisco—we are calling it Chinatown. It’s a great little town, and it definitely reminds me of home.

I miss you all so much. I wish you could all come over and stay with me. Unfortunately this Exclusion Act prevents you all from doing so because ships aren’t allowed to bring over any more Chinese Immigrants, at least for now. Anyway, say hello to everyone for me. 我爱你们。

Wish you all the best until I see you,

杜海凯



Sources:

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Picture link: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/chinese-canadians/index-e.html>